FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Volume XXI, Number 1, February 1970

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***Our Purpose:** To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.*

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EVENING PRAYER

Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,
God grant me grace my prayers to say.
O God, preserve my mother dear
In strength and health for many a year;
And, oh! preserve my father too,
And may I pay him reverence due—
And may I my best thoughts employ
To be my parents' hope and joy.
And, oh! preserve my brothers both
From evil doings and from sloth;
And may we always love each other,
Our friends, our father, and our mother.
And still, O Lord, to me impart
An innocent and grateful heart,
That after my last sleep I may
Awake to Thy eternal day! Amen.

—*Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Lamb of God:

With best wishes in the name of our precious Lord and Saviour. May the blessings of God be upon you today as I sit here at my window with the sun shining through it is a very pleasant feeling. My heart is thankful to God for His goodness to me, but at the same time it makes me to grieve because so many in the world don't know the Lord Jesus Christ. There is so much to do and we must all be willing and eager to do our part in the Lord's work. I am living for the day when I will receive a letter from you. The tears rolled down my cheeks when I just think of the sudden happenings in Nigeria. I mean, the evils brought about by the civil war. The atrocities committed by the rebels are great. Let us pray for a soon return of peace to Nigeria. Many lives are going away daily. People seem to have disregard for God's work. Several people here choose the Satanic life and refuse to heed the word of God. Many people have become refugees. We need your sincere prayers....

I have long been looking for a fellowship like this to affiliate myself in prayers....I will like to become an active member and let people know more about this world-wide organization. I know, as the name implies, this group is a good one.... I ask you that you continue to be caring for me. Continue to be praying seriously for us for a quick return of world peace. Dear friends in Christ, send us your books and other things, your teaching about the Fellowship in Prayer.

We need more helps from you, and this is the period when all the Christians there should share troubles with us, and this is the time they should kneel down on their knees to pray for us here. Otherwise, this country will once turn to a heathen nation. Pray, pray, pray for us.... Yours in Christ,

Brother Battanu (U. B. James)

Ukanafun Edem Inyang
c/o S. Unkanafun B. A.
via Abau P. O.
South Eastern State, Nigeria

EDITORIAL

Thoughts while watching snow fall: Probably everybody who's reached the age of reason (12, although it occasionally gets stretched to 99 or so) has read an essay, an aphorism, or a dissertation about snowflakes. Indeed, if one has somehow managed to escape all the paeans in thousands of references, from the first Christmas stocking on up, there is always the madness-magic of the little algid particles themselves. Gentle independents, they. Sturdy collectives, contemplative and unruly mobs. Like people—more poetry than truth.

Which is well and good. Poetry is usually more truthful than "truth," if less veridical than "fact." We imbue the snow and its falling (processual, like life itself) with all kinds of properties, associations, and comforts that only a Bishop Berkeley could fully appreciate, or catalogue. Snow-poetry could but be an invention of northern peoples—Germans, Russians, Scandinavians, Britains, North Americans (in the most technical sense), Icelanders, Eskimos—for whom it's a reality from at least the second Christmas stocking up. Not so with a Brazilian or a South African. (I'll never forget my own experience with two Christmases spent back-to-back in the Caribbean and California. Somehow, it just wasn't the same. And the kind of compensating, but unconscious, gestures I made to "make it so" were not experiential but reflexive.) From the distance of time, geography, even perspective, it's a didactic reflex too worshipful, too grandiosely second-hand for the nubbier amorphous vision of *knowing*. No wonder that snow was a favorite theme of the ancient Chinese poets—it was the closest natural event to a language of ideograms that better said what things were not than what they were, and that the color of snow, white, signified death—*quiet* and inevitable death, to be sure—rather than "purity" or "virtue" was even more attractive to their sensibilities.

Yes, let us marvel at snowflakes. They are something to marvel at—while we still have time. They have been compared to so many other things—societies, cultures, arts, ideas, and God knows what else—that we should marvel over again. Each flake unique, an inspired improvisation of geometric precision. Unfortunately, the extrapolations are not. And you know them well by now, too: the unity-out-of-diversity theme, the ease-the-way-for-Santa's-sleigh theme, and all the other themes. Yes, let us marvel. For what illusions, what necessities man can manufacture out of "natural events," using the poor vaporous adolescents the way the devil used scripture, to our own purposes.

Thus, I may as well use it to mine. Snow is a blessing. It is especially a blessing when you live where I do. New York City is at one and the same time the most beautiful city in the world, and the ugliest. It is a city that carefully-recklessly plots its own destruction—a jungle, but a JUNGLE so far removed from the experience of people elsewhere that the word ceases to mean anything. The European who finds garbage on his street in Paris, Copenhagen, or Brussels is mortified; yet he finds it "attractive" (picturesque, as it were) on New York City streets. The enlightened Oriental finds the citizens curiously primitive, for all their self-conferred sophistication. The architect finds it a living horror. The dog-walker finds a wild-west for his pet's self-expression. The motorist finds horn-honking irresistible. Mutt finds his correlative Jeff; space finds parsley; problem finds *atical*. But snow finds its destiny!

What snow does is still a city gone stir-crazy. It covers the hideous, blots out the ugly. It mutes the horns and other shrillnesses. It purges the old and brings a vision of freshness to the young. It slows traffic, sometimes to a standstill. Mainly, it keeps people home where, whatever the quality of their family life, they are quiet about it. It makes people, above all else, keep, as Schop-

enhauer noted, "...their distance." And peace reigns. For that terribly pristine, terribly self-congratulatory hour that peace reigns, all is well. The dirty condiments will come later, quickly —the smog, the soot, the dirt, the confusion, the slush that is not as pure as the driven slush.

Where are we at that moment? We are in a state of grace that can say, "Snow should be the state-of-grace condition of all religions: covering, comforting, converting. Shouldn't it be absorbing like the interior landscape? Shouldn't it be demonstrative rather than dialectical, like working missionaries-at-large?"

Snow won't say, which leaves us with a dilemma. We must speak in our hearts for it, which means we should leave it alone. It should be free, to fall and drift and soar with beautifully "self"-contrived purposes, in order to favor those things we won't or can't see with quite a straight eye.

Fall, snow. We need you.

—J. W.

MEDITATION *Maud Strike*

Here I sit in tranquility and bliss, hands folded as I listen to whisperings of heart and soul, whisperings that tell me God is nigh, and I, lowly mortal, am in the warm embrace of his love. As an aura it surrounds me, letting my thoughts drift to that other realm, the second life God has promised.

My lips move in silence, forming a prayer that drifts, enveloping my soul, bringing the peace / the ecstasy that moments of meditation give me, God's faithful follower.

GRANDMOTHER BRONSON

Eleanor Ebersole

When I have reached the age
when I have stopped
to rest, and wait
before another task.
When I feel it wiser
to let another
win a game or do
what I have started.
When I find myself waiting
for the youngest one
to plant the autumn bulbs
or do an errand
with words such as
"Be a dear,"
I hope my heart still runs
through meadows
dances, swings
laughs. Then I will know
goodness does not perish
nor dreams, nor life.

In response to an editorial query, the poet writes: "Grandmother Bronson was my grandmother. She lived in a lovely small New England town. When we were children, we spent many happy summer weeks with her. She always saved the gladiola bulbs for me to plant in the spring and made blueberry muffins with the blueberries I picked."

THE SIMPLE JOYS OF LIFE

Minnie M. Bauer

Now, in my senior years, as I sit and watch the world go by with its hectic craving for pleasure, fun, money, power, prestige and gratification of self, I wish someone would write about the simple joys of life. I have in mind the things that everyone can obtain—provided he does so before the infirmities of old age overtake him.

As I become less and less able to get around, I think of the joys of walking down a country road or sauntering along a running stream, observing nature at its best. Or the satisfaction of just doing one's daily task well, of taking time to fashion something for the pure joy of it.

As my hearing gradually leaves me, I think of the joys of a loved one's voice, the laughter of children at play, music, a bird's song, the distant church bell. Or the roll of thunder and the swish of the wind as it brings the rain. Sometimes just the near-silence of the softly falling snow provides a measure of quiet joy.

As my eyesight dims, I think of the joys of reading, be it a letter, or a book, or some subject for deep thought. How wonderful it is to see the evening sky bright with stars and full moon, to catch the glow of the rising sun at dawn, or linger with gorgeous sunsets at day's end. To see my neighbor's well-planned flower garden with its riot of color and bloom, or to look across my valley to the hills beyond and the well-plowed land that later will become a waving sea of golden wheat.

As my diet, for health's sake, becomes more meager, I think of the joys of plain food, well prepared—fresh eggs and country ham before the day's labor, a congenial lunch with neighbor or friend, the solid meat-and-vegetable meal at the close of day with the family gathered round. And the great abundance of food our land provides.

I have experienced countless simple joys such as these. Now, in old age, I live contentedly in the memory of them. And count the further joy of much leisure, a time to rest and pray. I have, finally, the greatest joy of all, a fervent, trusting faith in an all-wise Creator, a God of love, truth, and justice, who always watches over us.

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GROWING

Jean M. Burroughs

I have a little more to grow before I'm tall,
I have a few more days before I'm big and strong.
So speaks the sage at the age of three
Not knowing the path is so steep and long;
He speaks of inches, I speak of soul—
Yes, I, too, have more to grow before I'm old . . .

HANDMAIDEN OR HELPMATE

Ann Wharton

In almost every magazine or newspaper we pick up, there is at least one article about the woman's responsibility in the emotional aspects of marriage. That is, keeping her husband completely happy so he will not be tempted to stray. Why, I wonder, isn't more written on the man's responsibility in keeping his woman romantically interested?

There are still some men who subscribe to the theory that a wife's function is synonomous with that of a concubine and handmaiden. Such a man expects acquiescence and subservience from his mate. The wife is to run his house, birth his children, and respect his right to as much freedom as he cares to enjoy. This type of husband regards his wife as a sound financial investment for his comfort, a means of propagating his name, an asset in establishing his respectability in the business and professional world, and a protection against designing females.

I've read articles in several men's magazines and also a syndicated newspaper column (Count Marco, *San Francisco Chronicle*) which are classics on the mid-Victorian ideal of a woman's role as wife and mistress. The philosophy is that every woman is so lucky to have gotten a man that she should spend each waking hour plotting ways to keep him. And some of these men writers speak of the American woman in a most derogatory fashion—in comparison to her European counterpart. According to them, the American woman is often untidy, lazy, uncouth, and knows nothing about being a proper wife and mother. She is advised as to how she can overcome

these almost insurmountable obstacles: She should always be alluring—no matter what the hour or circumstance; she should also be silent as much of the time as possible; and she must never work outside the home.

Now, I grant you that we all like to look fetching most of the time. And the majority of wives have no aspiration to be a fishwife. Though it seems to me that, in my own experience, men as a whole prefer women with whom they can feel comfortable. Not only that, most of them like to talk to women. (We'll get to work later.)

Wives, as a general rule, have no desire to play mother, except to their children. (There is a difference in comforting a husband in difficult times or caring for him during an illness, if this can be called "mothering.") As for playing the role of mistress all of the time, I think it would exhaust our husbands—not to mention ourselves. Mistresses are usually taken in small doses, and men rarely marry them even when they are freed to do so.

I am considered quite feminine; I appreciate my husband; I want to be attractive for him (and try); I want our house to be orderly and inviting—and most of all for it to be considered a home. But I also wish to be an individual and for my husband to want me the way I am. This doesn't mean that I'm not willing to go out of my way to please him, even though it may not be something I particularly like to do. I am not inclined, however, to play a masochistic role.

There are many women who feel as I do. Let's be realistic. We cannot always be perfectly groomed. Nor do I believe that men would have us so. Not all men look for the same things in a woman, fortunately for us! Besides, appeal consists of many things: a magnetic personality, a bewitching smile, lovely eyes, a certain style,

beautiful hair, a scintillating walk, or any number of facets—either singly or combined—contribute to making a woman desirable to men.

Of course, there are times when a man wonders just what he saw in his wife. After all, he sees her in all stages of dress and undress, when she first awakens, when she is feeling rotten. And she certainly isn't a vision of loveliness in all of these situations. This recalls a story (supposedly true) that I once heard: A salty Navy officer told his buddies that he was initially attracted to the girl he married because of her beautiful singing voice. One night, while lying in bed watching his sleeping wife, he tried to rationalize his love for her. Frantically, he aroused her, saying, "For the luvva Mike, Mary, wake up and sing!"

There are certainly suitable evenings for a long skirt, candlelight, and wine—but not a steady diet of it night after night. Sometimes a man just wants to collapse when he gets home. A wife waiting breathlessly, ravishing in her most dazzling hostess gown, is not very conducive to relaxation. And the husband can rightfully resent the fact that he is expected to match her mood. (Also, if several offspring of assorted sizes are wandering across the "stage," it is somewhat disconcerting.) When a man comes home each evening to this setting, it is no longer special enough to spark him. In fact, the men I know would find it monotonous and would be bored to death.

If a woman keeps herself neatly groomed and chooses her clothes with care, she can almost always look attractive. Most modern men prefer that a woman wear simple colorful blouses and sweaters with skirts, casual dresses, or even well-cut pants at home. I do agree that all women should own exciting lingerie and provocative nighties. Each woman should have two or three stunning outfits which suit her personality and budget. Any clever woman can manage to have these things with skill and wise planning.

(I might add that women with modest incomes cannot afford to buy cheap clothes; they have to be replaced too often.)

Very few men like to see their women in high heels around the house every day. What's exceptional about a woman's appearance if she looks the same both day and night? She should not be a distraction all of the time. Husbands appreciate our looking glamorous when we go out for the evening, but they do not like to see us dressed for the cocktail hour all day.

Friendships with both men and women are essential to a well-rounded life, but I like men better. Most females do unless they have chosen for some reason not to be a "woman." I refer to women who want all of the advantages of marriage, but use every excuse (including children) to avoid being a "wife" to their husbands.

It is true that life is very empty for a woman without a man to love. But it is essential that this love be a mutual one. We do not usually choose to live alone.

Many malicious comments have been made about divorcees, implying that most of them spend their free time sitting on bar stools in search of a man. I have known very few divorcees who had the time, the money, or the inclination to go to cocktail lounges alone for any purpose. These women are usually far too busy with full-time jobs, housekeeping, and children. (I speak from first-hand knowledge.) There are more misconceptions about divorced women than of any other subculture in our society. She is, unfortunately, all too often judged by the minority. The divorcee is considered an inadequate woman, by the failure of her marriage. Actually, both partners usually contribute to a divorce, if it is nothing more than the fact that they made poor choices in the first place.

Of course, not every man wants a handmaiden for a life's companion, any more than a woman wants her man always to be the knight-in-shining-armor. A wife can't discuss the monthly bills Johnny's homework, or a family purchase with Prince Charming. Only a mature husband can work out solutions for these facts of life. Nor do men appreciate a doormat; they soon become oblivious to walking over it each day—no matter how lovely it may look. Our husbands married us because they found something uniquely suited to their ideals in us. If we change to fit the prototype of the perfect wife, we are no longer the girls they married.

For the most part, we make our own choices. We choose our marriage partners because their personalities represent what we need to complement ours. Many conservative men choose a casual outgoing type as a spouse. Her spontaneity gives him confidence in his relations with others. The extroverted man will often choose a quiet unobtrusive girl to balance his own gregariousness.

Marriage is, without a doubt, the biggest challenge we meet in life. If we cannot be ourselves, and I speak for both men and women, then how can it possibly be worthwhile. We all wish to be treated with regard; we all wish to have our ideas respected. Few women want to be considered a legal prostitute any more than men want to be considered a meal ticket.

Much is said about working wives and the adverse effect they can have upon a marriage. In reality, the self-supporting woman has a freedom of choice. She does not have to feel pressured to marry someone to support her. Some men prefer that their wives work—and many wives are happier working. These husbands take a certain pride in their wives' status. They find that a woman who lives in the business or professional world part of the day is often more understanding and stimulating. Usually, women who are successful in their jobs are well-organized and conscientious both at the

office and at home. Dr. Frank S. Caprio, in his book *Unfaithful,* verifies this statement: "Men of our times especially need to free themselves of outworn concepts. The increase in education for women, and a succession of wars, have changed the social picture. A husband who has a well-run home and a contented working wife has more reason to be proud of his setup than one who goes home to a discontented or unfaithful wife and a stack of doctor's bills for her frustration ailments."

I happen to be a working wife and mother. And I still enjoy doing thoughtful things for my husband. On weekend mornings, we like having breakfast in bed. Most of the time, I prepare the tray for these tete-a-tetes. But if we have been up very late or I am especially tired, my husband does not feel threatened in the least.

My opinion has always been that men who will never condescend to do anything considered to be a woman's job (washing dishes, making a bed, etc.) are quite insecure in their own masculinity. Men who have real inner strength and are truly protective do whatever seems practical at the moment for the mutual welfare of both partners. They do not have constantly to "prove" their masculinity.

There are plenty of husbands who never bother to know their wives as persons, nor do they really listen when she talks. Men do not recognize that we care not whether they agree or disagree, but they must engage our attention and interest. A woman must feel free to assert herself as an individual with her husband. Society frowns upon this facet in the wife's personality. Yet, we get about what we expect from other people, and they can't possibly know what we want unless we tell them. A woman does not sacrifice femininity by being assertive.

Communication is perhaps the most delicate art in marriage. Every married couple needs a course in semantics. What we say

may not be what we really feel. And the other person may place another connotation upon our words. For example, my impression of your impression of me may not be at all correct. Many arguments start from a lack of understanding as to what the other partner was trying to say. Clarification of mutual problems cannot be accomplished if the wife uses the Yes, Darling technique. If a couple cannot communicate verbally, esthetically, and physically, they cannot experience a full measure of happiness.

Some men have said that, upon entering wedlock, the American wife behaves as a shocked prude or a coy teen-ager. On the contrary, marriage gives her the emotional security and freedom to express her passion fully. Many marriages grow stale because of the lack of effort by the husband to make his wife feel wanted, appreciated, and desirable.

Too often, all courtship by the man ends with the honeymoon. Lovemaking becomes routine, a set pattern. He brushes his teeth, turns out the light, and says goodnight or takes her in the same manner. The woman no longer feels captivating; she feels like an object—not a person. A woman wants to feel seductive, but she does not wish to be the seducer. At times, she feels daring enough to initiate the desire in her husband. But the second step is up to him. It is not a woman's nature to be aggressive, and she must feel wanted. If her overture is met with a have-you-lost-your-mind look, she withdraws and feels rejected. Some men associate any boldness on the wife's part with a woman-of-the-street.

Most wives cannot accept the one-night-stand treatment. Variety is important to a woman, as well as to her husband. She does not expect all of the preliminaries each time, but she is more secure if she receives them part of the time. Men who skip the hors d'oeuvres before the entree cannot know what they are missing in the intimacy of marriage.

It is often said that sex is primarily emotional for a woman and physical for a man, but both the physical and emotional aspects must be experienced to attain a satisfying relationship. Dr. Caprio has this to say about wives:

> A husband ought to be grateful when a wife loves him enough to want to keep their sex relations varied and pleasurable. He may not realize it, but he is in far less danger of having an unfaithful wife if she expresses her desires for variation in love, with him, than if she remains silent and disappointed and decides she will have to go outside her marriage.

Fidelity is extremely important to most women. They can never lightly accept infidelity on the husband's part. Very few women, I believe, are unfaithful unless the husband is exceptionally blind to his wife's emotional needs.

Most of us will agree, too, that the husband must also contribute to his children's emotional stability. It is imperative that children know their father as a person, not just as a mere figurehead. The daughter bases her knowledge and judgment of men throughout her life upon her relationship with her father. The son's male identity is very closely linked with that of his father's. The son develops his own strength from and patterns his manhood upon, the image his father creates. Consequently, the father must share in training them to live in society as mature, well-adjusted adults.

The maturing process mellows us, but it does not change us basically. When we love, we want to please. We want to do our best to make our marriage partners happy. We all learn the game of give-and-take. (Let's hope we learned this lesson before marriage.) We learn to cooperate, to compromise, and to reciprocate. We learn which areas are better handled by one partner and which rightfully belong to the other. We learn that an interchange of roles is some-

times more practical. We recognize that each one needs to have some time alone to sort the clutter of his thoughts and to revitalize himself for the everyday struggles which each of us face. We do not want to live in a world of make-believe. But we do appreciate thoughtfulness. An occasional evening of being courted, the birthday gift which is chosen with care, the anniversary attentively remembered brightens the day-to-day routine and cofirms a woman's realization of her own fulfillment.

Kahlil Gibran describes the marriage relationship exquisitely in *The Prophet:*

> Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping. For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts. And stand together yet not too near together: For the pillars of the temple stand apart. And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.

The woman will, of course, always have more responsibilities within the home, and we are willing to accept this reality. Most of all, we want to be recognized, not only as wives and mothers, but as distinct personalities in our own right. We wish to have our ideas valued, our intelligence acknowledged, and our womanliness cherished. In return we offer love, loyalty, and compassion to our families and the rest of the world. Reprinted from OPINION MAGAZINE

ANNIVERSARY ADVICE

Eleanore-Melissa

Love may be
A plane to fly
Through the
Matrimonial sky,
Or the anchor
To a boat
Harbored in a bay
Remote.

Love may be
A myriad of things,
Inanimate,
Or borne on wings.
Love is what
You make of it.
Never waste
A single bit!

MOTION

Carol M. Mandola

Upon the jagged cliff I stood,
Each precipice naked,

Like thorns piercing the storm,
Of the mad, mad sky.

WHITE ON BLACK, painting by Wassily Kandinsky

Love

shods us

PEACE

in faith to

Gloria A. Martin

tread the path of

life!

IN PRAYER

Florence Hull Reef

Prayer is a time of quietness
From earthly cares set free
A time when I can hear God speak
In loving tones . . .

LET US REST

Florence B. Unangst

Life is a merry rat race.
Let us rest.
We seek money, truth or wisdom.
Let us rest.
Day will spend . . . life grow stale.
God have mercy and from our travail
Let us rest.

ON LEARNING HOW TO PRAY

H. Richard Rasmusson

That was a strange question a disciple asked Jesus when, after concluding prayer in a certain place, he said to him: "Master, teach us to pray." As far as we know, this is the only time any of the disciples asked Jesus to teach them. And what they wanted instruction in this time was prayer: "Teach us to pray."

Their new interest in prayer came not from new intellectual arguments in its favor, but from its effects in a personality. In the person of Jesus before them, they saw new exhibitions of its power. They saw him come in exhausted from a day's teaching and healing, and they saw him come out from his communion with God invigorated and strengthened. The longer they associated with him the more it grew upon them that their master's secret was his praying. And while the disciples had prayed all their lives, it was evident to them that they did not know how to pray. And seeing prayer fill their master's life with spiritual power and missing that effect of prayer in their lives, they said to him: "Teach us to pray."

There are things about prayer that I do not understand. All of us have problems and questions on this matter. But beyond all these difficulties remains the fact of prayer as a force doing something to personalities and giving them power and perseverance to work. And so whenever I hear someone argue that prayer is irrational, I keep thinking of personalities who were made hard-hitting, courageous, sacrificial, by praying. Like the disciples I am interested in prayer because I have seen exhibitions of its power in people.

Who of us would think of Henry M. Stanley, the African explorer, as being anything else but a hard-living, hard-hitting individual? When he came out of hell in Africa, he said to the world: "On all my expeditions prayer made me stronger, morally and men-

tally, than any of my non-praying companions. It did not blind my eyes, or dull my mind, or close my ears, but on the contrary, it gave me confidence. It did more, it gave me joy and pride in my work, and lifted me hopefully over the one thousand five hundred miles of forest tracks, eager to face the day's perils and fatigues." Here is another personality coming out from his praying invigorated, strengthened, empowered.

Aye, there is in the world a Power not ourselves working for righteousness. A Force able to release into us power, a life willing to well up within us and make us strong and of good courage. But how to get in contact with it, handle it? As the disciple said: "Master, teach us to pray." Let us look then at what some of the great pray-ers of history would tell us about how to pray:

Well, for one thing, they tell us to pray unselfishly. Many of our prayers are like this one:

Bless me and my wife
My son, John, and his wife,
Us four, no more. Amen.

But some of us are narrower still, and we pray:

Lord, bless us two
And that will do,

But others pray:

Lord, bless only me
That's as far as I can see.

But how different were the prayers of Jesus, and his instructions in prayer:

Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth,
As it is in heaven.

"Not my will, but thine be done."

"Teach ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

"Pray ye that the Lord, of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

If radio's slim fingers
Can pluck a melody
From night and toss it over
A continent or sea;
If petaled white notes
Of a violin
Are blown across a mountain
Or a city's din;
If songs like crimson roses
Are culled from thin, blue air,
Why should mortals wonder
If God hears prayer?

Always, Jesus' prayers were concerned with God's purposes and with the world's great need. And until we become captives to some of the Kingdom-of-God ends for the earth, we cannot pray the unselfish prayer at all. This comes when we find some great cause to live with and work for. As when Luther found himself belonging to the movement of reforming the churches in Germany, as when Greenfell saw the need in Labrador, as when Jane Addams gave herself to social service and the cause of world peace.

"Prayer," wrote Frederick Maurice to a friend, "is surely

not asking God to love people and do them good because we love them better than He does; but offering ourselves as sacrifices to Him that He may fill us with His love and send us on His errands." That's saying what I mean. And you can see at once that that makes praying a dangerous business. You never can tell where this kind of praying will take you. Far from such praying being a retreat from reality, escape into spiritual anaesthetic, it is a means of God laying hold on us and claiming us for some hard and difficult job. How many people would be in jobs and places other than where they are, had they never truly prayed?

For another thing, they tell us to pray receptively. The Bible tells about Jesus "going out" and "coming in." When he went out we are to understand that he gave himself to the task of directing, shaping, remaking his world; he was busy then doing something to his world. When he came in we are to understand that he relaxed and let another part of his world do something to him. And this last attitude is of the very essence of prayer. Instead of being aggressive, assertive, active when in communion with God, we must use another technique altogether and become appreciative and receptive. "Spirit of God, descend upon my heart. Drop thy still dews of quietness, till all our strivings cease."

Anyone who attends a music concert must come receptively. If I want to get the most out of a concert for myself I must bring with me *not* the technique we use tackling the problems in our work-a-day world, but the technique of quiet, calm, appreciation, surrender—in short, being receptive. There are times when we go out and do something to our world. But there are other times when we come in and let the world of beauty or music or truth do something to us; as, feeling empty, we come to receive—which vitally pertains to prayer.

Now, this makes prayer something vastly different from forcing our selfish will upon God and His universe. And very often

this has been the whole meaning of prayer. Too often people conceive of prayer as a means of persuading God to do for them what they want. They make God a magnified bellhop; and prayer is ringing a bell whereby they get what they want.

But the great souls of history have prayed another way altogether. They have prayed receptively. "I will hear," said the Psalmist, "what God the Lord will speak." "Not my will, but thine be done," Jesus said. The symbol of prayer is the open heart and that calls for receptivity.

Harry Emerson Fosdick once wrote:

Receptive make our spirits,
Our need is to be still;
As dawn fades flickering candle
To dim our anxious will.
Reveal thy radiance through us,
Thine ample strength release.
Not ours but thine the triumph,
In the power of peace.

Again, they tell us to pray affirmatively. Much of our scepticism with reference to prayer has its roots in our failure to pray affirmatively.

Here is a person who has become caught in the evils of some sin or habit. He has prayed a great deal about it and has been earnest and sincere in his praying. Yet, he makes the confession to the minister that he has received no help. And with a little cross-examination the minister finds that, in praying, the person has been holding his sin or need in the center of attention.

Picture a man who is in ill health going to prayer about his need and praying thus: "I am sick, very sick; my pain, O Lord, is

very severe. Look upon me in kindness because I am exceedingly sick." And, of course, with every repetition of such a prayer, the man builds his sickness more deeply into his life. And this principle holds for every temptation and need, from sins of the flesh to sins like discouragement and anxiety. The failure of this kind of prayer is the failure to pray affirmatively.

When we pray affirmatively we turn our backs on our wretched, miserable needs, refuse to hold in the center of our attention our sins and shortcomings, and concentrate instead on the rich resources of the divine goodness and, as Paul put it, "think on what is true, worthy, pure, on everything excellent and praiseworthy."

And such are the great prayers of the Bible:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul.

That is affirmative prayer.

Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.

That is affirmative prayer.

This, then, is the answer to the problem of learning how to pray:

Pray unselfishly.
Pray receptively.
Pray affirmatively.

LETTER #14

Peter Funk

Within the Episcopal Church, there exists a Franciscan monastic order called the Society of St. Francis. This community of men has its headquarters of the American Province at Mount Sinai, Long Island, New York. The society is world-wide with provinces also in England, Australia, New Guinea, and Africa.

As is found with Roman Catholic Franciscans, there are Three Orders within the society. The First Order is comprised of friars who take the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. The Second Order is made up of Episcopalian nuns.

What may be especially interesting to the readers of FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER is that those individuals who belong to the Third Order are laymen. These are men and women who, while living in the world, follow a strict rule of prayer and service. It too is world-wide and, though not a large order at the moment in America, it is definitely growing. The vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience are adapted, of course, for family living.

Members of the Third Order represent every walk of life—doctors, teachers, businessmen, housewives, janitors, Episcopalian priests, college students, etc. They undergo a training period of a six-month postulancy and a two-year novitiate. After that, they become Professed Tertiaries. This is an exciting movement within the Church, and it is beginning to attract widespread attention.

Peter Funk is the Novice Director of the Third Order for the American Province, and the following is an excerpt from one of his monthly letters to novices:

"What I seem to lack most of all, is a real sense of *humility*. Perhaps I don't really understand what the word means."

"With respect to *brotherhood* this is something I am not constant about. I am too often irritable and pray that I will improve in this area."

"I am still struggling and failing miserably with *mental prayer.*"

"Yesterday I bought a new record player and today I took it back. It is a luxury I don't need. I have too many material things and I am not living a *simple life.* It is too complex."

These quotations culled from monthly reports by American postulants and novices exemplify the four main categories that seem to be among the most troublesome in living a *Rule of Life.*

Not long ago an area held one of its first meetings. The group was comprised of professed Tertiaries, postulants, and novices. The meeting was informal, and everyone participated in the discussion. Those four areas of difficulty were mentioned. There was almost unanimous agreement that each of us was similarly troubled by either some or all of them.

As I look at this list, I wonder if they are not especially revealing of the temper of our times—personal and national arrogance; wars, riots, genocide; the misconceptions so many people in the church have of prayer; the stress on materialism. All of these are in alarming evidence. Our times are not only as chaotic as those during which St. Francis lived, but there is also a desperate urgency to the situation, for man now has the capacity to destroy himself.

And these four areas of difficulty for novices are not esoteric problems involving a few people. They are at the heart of the sickness of our times. If St. Francis and his followers were needed in the 13th and 14th centuries, how much more are they needed today!

Humility—Cutting through the various layers of definitions and explanations, the core mean-

ing of "humility," as a religious person accepts the sense of the word, is a complete dependence on God for everything.

Our age is the complete antithesis of this kind of humility, for man is the measure of man in all things. There may be a tolerance for God or a token acceptance of the idea of Him, but he plays no conscious part in human evaluations on the level of national or international decisions.

We may try to be humble, but humility is not a virtue that can be striven after. It is part of a whole concept and way of life. How can I say that this month I will be humble?

What I can say is that this month I will try to stop thinking so much of myself. I will not worry so much about failing or succeeding in my job, but with God's help will simply do my best. How on earth can I be humble when I am always worrying about myself?

I will try also to realize that everything I am and have is the result of God's love of this world.

A truly humble person is no shrinking violet. Quite the contrary. He enters into the world with zest and confidence, for he knows that God goes with him. And this is the way it was with St. Francis in all that he accomplished. An unknown, he dared to ask the Pope's approval for his way of life. In a world hostile to religion, he dared to dream of his army of beggars revitalizing the world.

May we learn to be humble disciples of such a humble master?

Brotherhood—No wonder so many of our brothers and sisters in the Society of St. Francis are troubled. The word "brotherhood" has almost lost its meaning in a world rent with racial violence, the Vietnamese war, the civil war in Nigeria, the imprisonment of Czechoslovakia, ad infinitum.

Not long ago I was working

with a student on a school problem. Suddenly his mind grasped the answer, and with astonishment he found that he not only understood that particular problem, but that it was a key to understanding the underlying concept and a host of related problems. He could grasp the whole.

And so it is with brotherhood when Christ becomes the central factor. Like the student, suddenly, we see the problems of mankind in a different perspective. Rather than isolated incidents, they are part of a related, intelligent whole, and we are able to bring order out of chaos.

Our mission is to make our Lord known and loved by men. This is the only real foundation for a peaceful world. What burst forth in everything St. Francis ever said or did was this love he held for our Lord. Through this love he and his followers affected his age. Francis and his followers today can affect our age.

May we remember always that God's love and mercy embrace the world.

Mental prayer—It is not difficult to see why this is one of the most difficult areas for a novice or for any of us. Not only is prayer a highly creative act, but because it is so utterly "un-material" and *apparently* inactive, most people believe that the same amount of time spent in being active and "in doing things" would seem to be far more practical. Then, too, we are all so used to the high pressure of always being on the go that time spent quietly with God will sometimes make one fidgety.

But prayer is the foundation of religious life. Everything else is subordinate to it. Everything!

At its simplest and at times most effective, prayer is conversation with God for our needs and the needs of others. Prayer is the silent but certain awareness that He dwells in us and we in Him. Through prayer we

become effective channels so that His love for the world can work through us, for if we are to be Franciscans, we are to be instruments of His peace.

What seems most difficult for novices is to get into the habit of setting aside time for mental prayer. It is better to do this only five minutes each and every day rather than an occasional half-hour.

O Lord, teach us to pray.

To live simply—An aspect of contemporary life is the extreme emphasis put on material things. So often there is an honest difficulty in choosing as to whether an item is a necessity or a luxury. I am writing this letter on an electric typewriter. Should I have kept my old manual one? I do a great deal of writing, and this one is so much faster.

Because of circumstances, one person may not be able to live outwardly in as simple a manner as someone else. Are we to be critical of him? What of the woman Tertiary who is married to a wealthy business man? How does she adapt to the requirement of simplicity?

The Third Order manual is explicit in pointing out that simplicity of life does not only involve material objects. It is an entire attitude that we are concerned with. But at its best perhaps it is the simplicity of the true Franciscan that intrigues the world, for since he is not encumbered with "things," he can take on more of the burdens of mankind.

Sir Thomas More is a good example of how one individual handled the dilemma. His service to his king demanded that he live outwardly a rather affluent life. As an individual, however, he lived a life of discipline, dedicated to God. When the time came for him to give up everything, he was able to do this willingly.

Help us, O Lord, to cheerfully accomplish those things you command.

God calls businessmen to His service just as a minister or priest is called to preach.

BOMAH

Wallace E. Johnson

Over at our business headquarters in Memphis, Tennesee, we have a motto, 'Bomah,' which I occasionally repeat to startled visitors. I then go on to explain that Bomah means 'Builder of Men and Homes.' Nearly twenty-five years ago, that is what I asked the Lord to let me be. That is what, with His help, I am trying to be today.

From that point in 1939, when as a discouraged supplies salesman earning $37.50 a week I asked God's guidance, things began to change. They continued to change for the better, as long as I prayed and as long as I asked the Lord to let me do the right thing. We builders and boosters of the business world need to depend upon God for our daily wisdom; we need Him just as does the minister or priest who calls upon divine power to direct his daily actions. Because I believe God calls businessmen to His service (just as a minister is called to preach), I feel He wants me to use my brains to build small, pleasant, modern homes which people of the lower income bracket can buy or rent.

Again, because we have been permitted to build more than 1,000 low-rent houses a year for the last twenty years, I do not hesitate to say God is my partner. Today when someone fondly calls me 'the Henry Ford of the Building Business,' I accept it sincerely as a compliment to what the God-man partnership can do. In fact, we continue to pray to God for wisdom even in solving the many little things incidental to the business world. My habit

of praying to God for guidance in specific things has been with me for a long time, and even now I keep a daily list of numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.—items to ask God about, praying to Him to show me the way. My own experience has proven to me that God does answer individual prayers, if we will only ask and have faith they will be answered.

The year 1945, for example, was a critical one for America and for myself. My formal prayer on that January 1st, written out on a ruled tablet as is my custom, began by invoking God's blessings on our armed forces abroad and by praying that His spirit would fill our people here at home, I then prayed in the following specific, concrete terms:

O Lord, help me to be one of the leaders of the nation in the building of men and homes, and help the city officials of Memphis to understand my goal, so they will help us instead of hinder us.

Help me, O Lord, to be a good Baptist, so that I may help to lead my church to develop a better United States, and teach me how to gain the confidence and win the souls of others to Your teaching. O Lord, help me to understand Thy will, so that I may take my proper place among the businessmen in the United States, and if it be Thy will, give me the proper leadership ability, so that I might help in molding the National Association of Home Builders into an instrument of Thy will.

God, please, let us build 2,000 units in 1945, and if it be in accordance with Thy divine purpose, let us accumulate enough money in that time to carry on our business.

O Lord, help us to build a good house, an inexpensive house for both white and Negro citizens in our community that has never been available to them before, and God, please, oh, please help us to convince the bankers and businessmen of our community that

these are safe investments, so that we can go on and on and on. Amen.

This specific prayer has been fundamental to my relationship with God and to my progress as a pioneer low-cost builder. (In 1945, incidentally, we did build 3,000 homes and apartments and ended the year with nearly $450,000 in the bank.) In that same spirit of constructing trim, attractive homes for thousands of alum-ridden white and Negro families, I haven't hesitated to ask God's help in getting the things the projects needed—a critical gas line, an increased lumber supply, a $200,000 loan. Yes, indeed, when there is good to be done for others, God answers our incidental day-to-day prayers!

I revere the home because I was brought up in a good Christian one down in Mississippi's piney woods. I had picked my first bale of cotton before I was eight, joined the church when I was eleven, and contracted to build a $9,000 house for our local railroad agent before I got out of high school. Although my mother, who traced her ancestry back to the famous New England preacher, Jonathan Edwards, often read from the Bible to us, there was no pleading or praying over me when I joined the church. I just felt the divine call—as I did later to build houses for the millions—and there was little ol' Wally Johnson walking down the aisle all by himself to give his heart to Jesus.

You might say providing well-built homes is my practical way of living my religion. A good home often makes a bad man good and a good man better. When you take a sorry sort of fellow out of the slums and put him in a house he can be proud of, he is apt to leave off his boozing, gambling habits and start to make something of himself. Over the years, I've watched what a good home can do for people—get them settled down, working in their own homes and gardens, starting to go to church and learning to love the Lord.

In these troubled times, when I lie down at night and turn the light off, I'm asleep by the time the room gets dark. I know I won't let the Lord down, and I know He won't let me down. What I've done so far is just the beginning. I've put a lot of people in good homes, homes that are going to inspire them to be better Christians. But I've just gotten started. There are still thousands of acres of slums across this country that ought to be replaced with decent housing. And if all the people who've been backing me keep their faith in me—I'm just going on and on.

If I just accomplish one thing, I will be well satisfied, If I can just convince my brother builders all over the country that they can not only make money for themselves but can help their community by building low-rent homes, then I will have done a whole lot for humanity.

Once a self-proclaimed 'poor, little peckerwood boy from Mississippi,' Wallace Johnson has become a nationally known mass homebuilder and one of the South's outstanding business, civic, and lay religious leaders. As president of Wallace E. Johnson, Inc., he is a champion constructor of low-income housing. As president of Holiday Inns of America, Inc., he has the world's largest motel system, with 366 inns now open to the American traveling public, with another 700 inns totaling 8,200 rooms presently under construction. A deeply religious, tithing, Bible-reading businessman, it is little wonder that Johnson is sometimes called 'the praying millionaire from Memphis.'

From FAITH IS A STAR by Roland Gammon
(published by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.)

NOTICES AND COMMENTS

NEW ADVISORS. Because of the interest he has expressed in the work of the Fellowship over the years, Willard Russell, of Houston, Texas, was invited to become one of our advisors from the Southern Zone. A prominent lawyer, businessman, rancher, farmer, and author (*Peace and Power Within* and *Invincible Forces*), Mr. Russell kindly accepted our invitation. . . . Also graciously accepting the role of advisor from the Western Zone was Mrs. Berneice McCombs, of Colorado Springs, Colorado. A longtime member, supporter, and literary contributor, Mrs. McCombs wrote: "My life has been quiet and simple. I am a native of Colorado Springs and dearly love this country. I have had the privilege of being a housewife and of watching two children grow up. The love for books and writing has been carried in my hip pocket all my life. The search for religious truths and deeper meanings are my main interest....How nice of you to give me such an honor!"

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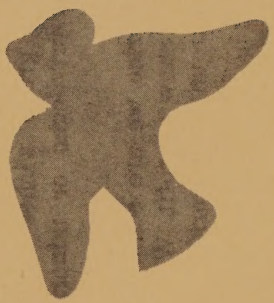

I shall pass through
this world but once.
If therefore,
there be any kindness
I can show,
or any good thing
I can do,
let me do it now;
let me not defer it
or neglect it,
for I shall not pass
this way again.

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